

CIA/OCI/CIB/0191/72
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Approved For Release 2005/09/09 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000900020175-1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN
10 AUG 1972

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Central Intelligence Bulletin

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No 548

10 August 1972

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USSR: The Central Committee conference on 8 August on the harvest reflects the leadership's concern that this year's grain crop will fail to meet both domestic and foreign requirements.

The conference, addressed by Brezhnev, reportedly discussed the progress of the harvest, procurement of agricultural products, a speedup in land reclamation work, and the development of the mixed feed industry. Members of the Politburo, party secretariat, and Council of Ministers, as well as officials of the Central Committee apparatus and editors of central newspapers, attended. Brezhnev's speech was not published.

The gathering of such an array of senior officials at the height of the vacation season indicates unusual concern over this year's harvest. It is estimated to be nine to ten percent less than the harvests of 1970 and 1971, largely because of severe winter weather and summer drought. Such a harvest would be a decided setback to Brezhnev's livestock program that is designed to improve the Soviet diet. This program requires a grain harvest substantially higher than in the last two years. Moreover, the requirements of the livestock program are believed to have already drawn down reserve stocks of wheat to the level considered vital as a strategic reserve.

As a result of the disappointing harvest prospects, the Soviets are buying large amounts of foreign grain, mainly wheat, for delivery during the next year. Purchases from the US, Canada, and France should enable the Soviets to divert more of their domestic grain to the livestock sector, fulfill most of their grain export commitments, and guarantee enough wheat of milling quality for their flour industry. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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THE NETHERLANDS: The Liberal and three confessional parties have agreed to form a minority government under Prime Minister Barend Biesheuvel, but a return to political stability must await the outcome of elections in November.

Formateur Biesheuvel managed to organize a four-party government on 8 August, three weeks after the defection of a fifth partner brought down his original majority coalition. The new cabinet will be supported shakily by some 74 of the 150 members of the lower house, but it may be able to count on a few additional votes from right-wing splinter groups.

Hard bargaining attended formation of the new coalition. The Liberals reluctantly dropped their call for government intervention by 1 November, failing a voluntary agreement on wage and price restraint. The three religious parties, despite their poor showing in recent polls, acceded to elections in November, rather than early 1973.

Between now and the elections, Biesheuvel will attempt to push his 1973 budget through parliament and to reach an agreement on wage and price policy for next year. His prospects for success are not good. On such issues as control of inflation and defense spending, the national interest is likely to be subordinated to intense maneuvering by all parties for electoral advantage. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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UGANDA: Growing tribal unrest in the army poses a threat to President Amin's government.

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[redacted] a dispute in the army between Amin's Kakwa tribe and other tribes from his home district of West Nile has already resulted in several deaths and could easily precipitate large-scale violence. Officers from the disaffected tribes resent the growing dominance in the army of the relatively small Kakwa tribe. They reportedly hope to enlist the support of other tribes in a move against Amin. Since Amin seized power in January 1971, he has more than doubled the number of Kakwa officers and enlisted men, making the tribe the second largest in the army. He also has stationed his fellow tribesmen in key units and installations.

Under Amin the traditionally unruly army has become more seriously troubled by tribal, ethnic, and religious rivalries that have caused bloody clashes. Large numbers of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers have been killed or have fled the country, thereby further weakening discipline. Amin has exercised little control over the army; his erratic exercise of power has in fact heightened tensions.

Nonetheless, as long as Amin retains the support of the key units that were responsible for his successful coup, he probably will be able to hold on to power. These units are made up largely of Amin's fellow tribesmen. However, should they also suffer from tribal unrest or slip from his grasp, Amin would have great difficulty retaining control of the country. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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IRAQ: Kurdish nationalists are concerned that a two-year-old truce with the Baghdad government might break down.

A Kurdish nationalist who recently met with rebel leader Mulla Mustapha Barzani has told a US Embassy officer in Tehran that relations between Barzani and Iraqi strongman Saddam Tikriti are beyond repair. There have been few armed incidents between the regime's forces and the rebels since the peace accord was signed in March 1970, but mutual distrust and plotting have continued unabated.

Barzani has spurned Baghdad's attempts to bring the Kurds into a "national coalition," despite repeated Soviet pressures on the Kurdish leader to come to some accommodation with the government. Barzani's reluctance has been reinforced by two attempts on his life by government agents. Barzani, for his part, is actively plotting against the regime, but he represents no real threat without substantial foreign support.

At the moment, concerted action by either side does not appear imminent. The remoteness of a real political solution, however, is endangering the shaky truce. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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BOLIVIA: Continuing its efforts to attract foreign investment, the Banzer government apparently has decided to compensate investors in the Mina Matilde Corporation at a level that they probably will find acceptable. La Paz plans to offer \$13.4 million to US Steel and Philipps Brothers for the zinc mine nationalized in 1971 by the previous Torres administration. The US Government has agreed to encourage the investors to accept this proposal before the next negotiating session scheduled for later this month. The payment is to be made in cash, with the US Government helping to arrange financing for \$11.4 million. (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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